

# ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND GAME

## DIVISION OF COMMERCIAL FISHERIES

### NEWS RELEASE



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Date Issued: May 30, 2013  
Time: 8:00 a.m.

### **2013 Kuskokwim River Salmon Fishery News Release 3**

### **2013 Kuskokwim River Commercial Salmon Outlook and Management Strategy**

This is an announcement from the Alaska Department of Fish and Game at Bethel for commercial salmon fisherman in the Kuskokwim Area.

#### **2013 KUSKOKWIM RIVER OUTLOOK**

The 2013 Chinook salmon forecast is for a return between of 160,000 to 240,000 fish. Broad expectations are developed based on parent-year escapements and recent year trends for sockeye, chum, and coho salmon abundance, which are expected to be similar to 2012. Anticipated available surpluses for commercial harvest will range from 0 to 3,000 Chinook; 5,000 to 20,000 sockeye; 100,000 to 200,000 chum; and 60,000 to 120,000 coho salmon.

#### **2013 KUSKOKWIM RIVER MANAGEMENT STRATEGY**

In January 2013, a new management plan was adopted by the Alaska Board of Fisheries. ADF&G will follow guidelines outlined in the new *Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan 5 ACC 07.365*, to the extent possible, to meet escapement goals, provide for subsistence use, and allow commercial fishing on available harvestable surpluses.

#### **Subsistence Fishery**

Subsistence fishing closures are 6 hours before, during, and 3 hours after each commercial fishing period. In District 1, when one subdistrict is open to commercial fishing, subsistence fishing will be allowed in the majority of the other subdistrict. During closed periods, subsistence fishing for species other than salmon will be allowed with gillnets not exceeding 60 feet in length and a mesh size of 4 inches or less.

#### **District 1 Commercial Fishery**

As directed by the *Kuskokwim River Salmon Management Plan*, a commercial fishery shall be prosecuted by Emergency Order if inseason information indicates a run strength that is large enough to provide for a harvestable surplus and a reasonable opportunity for subsistence uses and for nonsubsistence fisheries. Processing capacity may limit commercial openings in District

1 to Subdistrict 1-B openings. Commercial openings may be announced when no large scale buyers are available to provide opportunity for permit holders operating as catcher/sellers or catcher/processors. Contact the ADF&G office in Bethel for more information about the catcher/seller or catcher/processor programs.

All commercial fishing periods will be limited to gillnets with 6-inch or smaller mesh size. As in 2012, there is the potential for opening the Lower Section of Subdistrict 1-B for two additional hours during commercial openings, dependent on salmon abundance and processor capacity.

Chinook salmon abundance, escapement, and subsistence needs may limit commercial harvest of chum and sockeye salmon in late June and early July. A commercial fishery directed at coho salmon is anticipated in late July and August.

### **Inseason Assessment and Research**

Inseason indicators of salmon run strength include the Bethel Test Fishery, subsistence catch reports, commercial catch statistics, aerial surveys, weirs, and additional tributary escapement monitoring projects operated by an assortment of partnerships between State, Federal, and Tribal organizations. Staff from Orutsararmiut Native Council will survey Bethel Area subsistence fishermen to assess salmon run timing and abundance.

For more information contact:

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